

Amendment to the Claims:

In the event the Examiner still thinks an amendment is necessary despite the remarks presented above, we propose several alternate sets of claims, as follows:

Alternate Claim Set 1 - Listing of Claims:

What Is Claimed Is:

1. (Currently amended) A method for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host by directly delivering an effective amount of an enterically-coated water-absorbent polymer to the intestinal tract wherein the polymer ~~is capable of absorb~~sing at least about ~~10~~ 20 times its weight in physiological saline.
2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the ~~polymer is enterically coated and the~~ method of delivery is oral administration.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~4~~1 wherein the polymer ~~is capable of absorbing~~absorbs at least 30 times its weight in physiological saline
6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the polymer ~~is capable of absorb~~sing at least 40 times its weight in physiological saline.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing acrylate containing monomers.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing monomer comprising acrylic acid or salts thereof.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is a polysaccharide.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing blood borne waste products.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing urea.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing phosphate.

13. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the enteric coating is selected from at least one of: hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, methacrylic acid polymers, or polymers of derivatives of methacrylic acid.

14. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the polymer is placed within an enterically coated capsule.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the enteric coating is selected from at least one of: hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, methacrylic acid polymers, or polymers of derivatives of methacrylic acid.

16. (Currently amended) A method for treating fluid overload states in a host by directly delivering an effective amount of an enterically-coated water-absorbent polymer to the intestinal tract wherein the polymer ~~is capable of absorbing~~ at least about ~~10~~ 20 times its weight in physiological saline.

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 wherein ~~the polymer is enterically coated and~~ the method of delivery is oral administration.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the fluid overload state is selected from at least one of: edema, congestive heart failure, ascites, and renal insufficiency.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)